

b) correlating the amount of IL-6 produced by said stromal cells to the amount of IL-1 $\beta$  in said bone marrow preparation.

2. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said bone marrow preparation is from an individual diagnosed with multiple myeloma.

3. (Amended) A method of diagnosing multiple myeloma in an individual, said method comprising determining the amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with a bone marrow preparation from said individual, wherein an elevated level of IL-6 is indicative of multiple myeloma.

4. (Amended) A method of determining likelihood of progression to active multiple myeloma in an individual, said method comprising determining the amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with a bone marrow from said individual, wherein an elevated level of IL-6 indicates said individual is likely to progress to active multiple myeloma.

5. (Amended) The method of claim 5, wherein said individual has been diagnosed with a multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder.

7. (Amended) The method of claim 4 or 5, wherein an elevated level of IL-6 is a concentration of IL-6 greater than the concentration of IL-6 produced by stromal cells incubated with 1 pg/ml of recombinant IL-1 $\beta$ .

8. (Amended) The method of any one of claims 1-8, wherein said bone marrow preparation is selected from the group consisting of a fresh supernatant from cultured bone marrow cells, a previously frozen supernatant from cultured bone marrow cells and a mononuclear cell preparation purified from bone marrow.

9. (Amended) The method of any one of claims 1-8, wherein an inhibitor of IL-1 $\beta$  is added to said stromal cells cultured with said bone marrow preparation.

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10. (Amended) The method of claim 10, wherein said inhibitor of IL-1 $\beta$  is selected from the group consisting of an anti-IL $\beta$  antibody, a soluble IL-1 receptor type I, a soluble IL-1 receptor type II, an IL-1 receptor antagonist, and an IL-1 TRAP.

15. (Amended) A method of monitoring the status of multiple myeloma in an individual, said method comprising:

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- a) determining the amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with a bone marrow preparation from said individual, said individual diagnosed with and undergoing treatment for multiple myeloma, said bone marrow preparation obtained after initiation of said treatment; and
  - b) comparing said amount of IL-6 with a known standard or a patient determined standard. --

Please add claim 28.

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-- 28. The method of claim 1, wherein said bone marrow preparation is from an individual diagnosed with a multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder. --